Date: October 17, 2012

Subject: Amendment No. 1 to APS-ASHA-13-000001 for FY 2013 American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) Program Worldwide

A. Background and Purpose of this Amendment

The purpose of this Amendment is to provide responses to questions received by September 14, 2012 in response to the ASHA draft APS that was posted on September 7, 2012. The questions and their answers are divided into four categories: General, Initial Environmental Examination, Commodities, and Construction.

B. Questions and Answers

General:

1. Q: Will further information and guidance beyond what is in the APS be available through an ASHA website?

A: USAID is posting on its website these FAQs, as well as a link to the APS (which resides on the grants.gov site). If appropriate, USAID may periodically update certain information relating to the APS on its website. However, grants.gov is the key site that applicants should consult for all official notices and other information regarding the APS.

2. Q: Is the FY2013 application the same as the FY 2012 application?

A: No, for FY2013 USAID is releasing an Annual Program Statement for ASHA, rather than a Request for Applications, as in FY2012. There are several differences between the two types of notices, as demonstrated in the text of the APS.

4. Q: Can proof of my organization's 501(c)(3) status be included as a PDF in grants.gov or does it have to be in MS Word?

A: The 501(c)(3) information can be included in searchable PDF format.

5. Q: How will I achieve page numbering when pulling together various documents for the application?

A: PDF documents can be numbered in PDF format by using the number page function in Adobe PDF Writer.

6. Q: Can ASHA funds be used to establish an Overseas Organization (OSI)?

A: No, the OSIs and USO must already be in existence and show a clear relationship to be

eligible to apply for and receive ASHA program funding.

7. **Q: Do the new project implementation plan (PIP) and project management plan (PMP) requirements apply to non-construction projects?**

   A: Yes, however it is possible that each of these may be quite short and very simple in the commodities context.

8. **Q: What is the difference between the electronic and printed versions of the APS? How may we obtain a copy of the printed document in case of differences? Can the printed document be distributed somehow?**

   A: There are no differences in the electronic and printed versions of the APS. Applicants can request a printed version of the APS from the USAID/ASHA office.

9. **Q: When I need to provide information regarding the cost of certain items in my application, should I supply in-country purchase prices or U.S. purchase prices?**

   A: Costs of commodities for your proposal should be based on the item cost for where you are actually seeking to procure your items (i.e. if you are buying from the United States, use U.S. prices, if you are buying locally or from another approved country, then those prices should be used).

10. **Q: Can vehicles be included and purchased for a project using an ASHA grant (e.g., an ambulance, school bus, mobile clinic, etc.)?**

    A: Vehicles that are directly related to the project, such as ambulances and school buses, may be requested and must be included on the commodities list and include a five year sustainability plan. Procurement of motorized equipment requires approval by USAID/ASHA staff and must follow USG procurement practices. USAID does not generally fund OSI program support costs other than audits, and accordingly has not typically funded vehicles that are used for daily monitoring or movement by staff/recipients to conduct regular business.

11. **Q: Will detailed application templates be released with the final APS?**

    A: Application templates will not be included, as evidence required to demonstrate eligibility and in support of the evaluation criteria is expected to differ for different proposal types. Note that the APS instructions were simplified based on feedback received on last year's Request for Application.

12. **Q: Is there a minimum amount required in a proposal for an ASHA grant?**

    A: No, grant minimums have been removed. The maximum amount for an ASHA grant award is $2 million.

13. **Q: The checklist at the end of the APS is very much appreciated, but can ASHA include everything that needs to be submitted?**

    A: ASHA has updated its checklist, however not all applications are the same and so documentation will not be the same. The checklist is at the general category of evidence rather than specific documentation.

14. **Q: I am confused about what page limitations apply to what sections of the application. Can you explain?**

    A: The APS application is restricted to 125 pages, except for the exempt sections. These exempt sections are as follows: Audits, construction drawings, SF-330, SF-424 series, documents in their native language that are translated to English (the English translations do apply to the page limit), the resume(s) of the principal officer(s) of the application, and the Articles of Incorporation for the USO and OSI. Of the 125 pages, up to 25 pages may be devoted to the basic proposal, and up to 100 may be devoted to non-exempt annexes/appendices/attachments (e.g., the USO Board of Directors listing).

15. **Q: We understand that USOs cannot utilize ASHA funds for any purpose and that OSI program support expenses are limited to required audits. Can USOs and OSIs include grant administration costs as part of grant cost-share contribution?**

    A: Yes, USOs and OSIs are encouraged to include grant administration costs incurred as part of their organization's cost share in their application for ASHA funding.

16. **Q: It is stated in Section G.2 Application Guidelines that searchable PDF documents shall be used for attachments. Is there a specific criterion for naming the PDF files?**

    A: There are no required naming conventions for PDF documents. The only requirement is that PDF documents must be formatted in a manner that allows for searches.

17. **Q: Do English translations have be literal ("word for word") translations, or a just a brief summary of the document? Most land titles are legalistically complex in the host country (or any) language, and very difficult to translate literally into English.**

    A: Yes, the translation should be literal.

18. **The APS states: "Specifically, USAID is looking to support OSIs that are founded and or sponsored by U.S. organizations, such as . . . undergraduate institutions with programs in liberal arts, medicine, nursing, agriculture, and the sciences."**

    Can programs in business management be included (i.e., educating how to apply American business practices and develop entrepreneurship is of great importance around the world and in line with the demonstration of American ideals and practices)?

A: Yes, programs that include business management are covered under the heading of liberal arts. Liberal arts in this context is very broad.

19. **Q: May annual operating budget data be provided in tabular form?**

A: Yes, this information may be provided in tabular form.

20. **Q: Can narrative information for the technical application be provided in a single document or must eligibility and other content be presented separately? (Prior to last year, information was provided in a single "application" document that was easy to prepare and familiar to most applicants. Content in the last cycle was segmented by topic area, with roughly a dozen required template documents. These appear to have been eliminated, but this is not clearly stated in the APS.)**

A: Yes, this information may be provided in a single document, but must clearly address each eligibility requirement in the APS, as well as the evaluation criteria.

21. **Q: Is the mandatory gender analysis to be provided as a separate item in the application or would it meet ASHA's evaluation process to incorporate gender information as part of the project description and the PIP and PMP narratives?**

A: Gender must be addressed in a specific section devoted to gender analysis. However, gender information may also be included in other application sections where it is deemed appropriate and relevant.

Initial Environmental Examination:

22. **Q: We would appreciate additional information on the new requirement of a Country Initial Environmental Examination (C-IEE). What level of detail does ASHA expect in this requirement? Does this requirement truly mean that a grantee needs to provide an assessment of the entire OSI country's environmental threats and opportunities? If so, this is a massive requirement?**

A: As described in the FY2013 programmatic initial environmental examination (P-IEE), C-IEEs are only required for construction and for certain other activities that involve procurement of certain commodities containing hazardous substances or equipment generating or producing hazardous substances. The C-IEE only deals with the environmental impacts of the project proposed and not the environmental situation of the whole country. USAID/ASHA staff will provide guidance upon issuance of a successful award. You may view ASHA's FY2013 P-IEE at: http://gemini.info.usaid.gov/egat/envcomp/document.php?doc_id=38656

23. **Q: Section H.1.3.6 of the APS states that "recipients of funds" "will be required" to submit a C-IEE. This leads me to believe that the C-IEE is carried out after the award is made. Is this the case? Does the C-IEE need to be submitted WITH the proposal or may**

it be carried out and submitted after the award is made?

A: The C-IEE is carried out after an award is made at the direction of the ASHA staff.

Commodities:

24. Q: What are the commodities to which the C-IEE requirement will apply?

A: In addition to construction projects, C-IEEs will be required for projects involving procurement of:

- hazardous-substance containing commodities that might be harmful to environmental health (e.g., lead painted chairs) or
- bio-medical/ analytical chemistry equipment or hazardous materials that produces or generates a medical /toxic/ radiological or hazardous waste (e.g., halogenated solvents, flammables, acidic/base liquids, heavy metals- mercury, cadmium and toxic chemicals both organic/ inorganic, sharps and pressured cylinders, nuclear tracers and dyes, etc.)

25. Q: Can you provide more detailed guidance on the eligibility of commodities and source and nationality requirements for commodities?

A: Further guidance on both of these topics is available at (http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/312.pdf and (http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/310.pdf. The specific requirements on these issues that USAID anticipates including in all grant agreements are available at http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303maa.pdf.

Construction:

26. Q: The opportunity to name an A/E firm and/or contractor at the time of application can lead applicants to think that need for a competitive bid process has been eliminated. If so, we are encouraged by the prospect of a shorter implementation process. Is our understanding correct?

A: 22 CFR 226.43 provides that "all procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition." Accordingly, grantees should anticipate using a competitive process to select an A/E firm and/or construction contractor. If a contractor and/or an A/E firm has been identified at the time of application, the applicant should provide general description of the award process, to include a description of the solicitation advertisement (how was it advertised and for how long), a description of any eligibility requirements for applicants, a description of criteria used to evaluate the applications, and a general synopsis of the results of the evaluation process.

The recipient shall be alert to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. In order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, and invitations for bids and/or requests for proposals shall be excluded from competing for such procurements. Awards shall be made to the bidder or offeror whose bid or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the recipient, price, quality and other factors considered. Solicitations shall clearly establish all requirements that the bidder or offeror shall fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated by the recipient. Any and all bids or offers may be rejected when it is in the recipient's interest to do

27. Q: The APS describes certain site analyses related to construction projects. Do all site and topographical surveys (including soil tests) need to be submitted with the proposal, or may they be carried out and submitted after the award is made?

A: The APS states that applicants must identify future planned investigations, such as site and topographical surveys (including soil tests). These investigations are not required to be submitted with the application, but can be carried out after award. If any surveys or other field tests have been completed at time of application, they should be included in the application to help describe the project and its status, as well as provide further evidence of applicants' investment in the OSI.